Children out of school

*163. SHRI VIJAYJ. DARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

whether Government are aware that out of 200 million children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, only 120 million are in schools;

if so, the steps Government are taking to ensure their attendance in schools;

whether the necessary infrastructure could be created from the existing financial resources; and

(d) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) Estimated populations in the age group of 6 to 14 years in March, 2003, was 20.9 crore against which provisional figure of enrolment in schools in classes l-VIII, as on 30.09.2003 was 17.7 crore.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-day Meal (MDM) are the two main Schemes being implemented to ensure universal participation of children in Elementary Education.

and (d) Allocation for Elementary Education has been substantially enhanced during the Xth Plan, including for creation necessary infrastructure. However, infrastructure requirements keep growing, and it is therefore not possible to indicate a specific time-frame for meeting such requirements fully.

Natural Heritage Sites

*164. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

whether there is any proposal to include the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats in the exclusive club of World Heritage Sites;

if so, the number of the natural heritage sites which have been identified so far in the country; and

whether any preliminary surveys have been conducted by UNESCO to fulfill the required parameters?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Preliminary